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NEWS RELEASE

May 31, 2005

New Jersey Commissioner Devon Brown named “Best in the Business” for Leadership by the American Correctional Association

It is with tremendous pride that we announce that Devon Brown, Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Corrections, has been selected as the “2005 Best in the Business” recipient for outstanding leadership by the American Correctional Association (ACA). In bestowing this exceedingly coveted, national distinction upon Commissioner Brown, the ACA recognized him as being one of the premier correctional officials in the country.

This is the second occasion within his esteemed, 31year career that Commissioner Brown has been so acknowledged by the ACA. During 1991, he pioneered the first correctional sponsored “Adopt a School” program in the United States. This crime prevention initiative was directed toward assisting homeless, inner-city children who resided in one of the most economically depressed, crime plagued sections of Baltimore, Maryland. The program was hailed as a national model and earned the project “Best in the Business” notoriety in 1992. Brown’s principled leadership and stellar demonstration of concern for the plight of this extremely vulnerable and often overlooked population was widely applauded and did much to promote increased public respect for the enormous contributions of the corrections profession.

In designating him as this year’s “Best in the Business” awardee for exceptional leadership, the ACA extended special accolade for the innovation, acute professionalism, and unfaltering will to make a meaningful difference that Commissioner Brown has displayed in guiding the New Jersey Department of Corrections into national prominence and prestige.

Further commendation was rendered by Richard Stalder, President of the Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA), and Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections, who related: “Despite highly formidable and oftentimes less than ideal circumstances, Commissioner Brown has remained focused, showing integrity, resourceful ingenuity, and uncompromising commitment to excellence no matter how daunting the presenting challenge. Through his inspiration and

unwavering resolve, he has advanced the profession and earned the New Jersey Department of Corrections a place among the most improved, progressively oriented, penal systems in the land.”

The College of New Jersey has likewise extolled Commissioner Brown for his extraordinary vision and stalwart dedication of purpose in naming him the “2004 Gene Carte Memorial Award” recipient for exemplary correctional leadership. This accolade, like the current tribute, is among the many that he has received during his illustrious career, including the prestigious, United States Department of Justice, John B. Pickett Fellowship, for study at the internationally renowned John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

The American Correctional Association is the oldest and largest international correctional organization in the world. It is dedicated to serving all disciplines within the corrections profession and devoted to the promotion of excellence in all aspects of the field. Established in 1870, the ACA currently has more than 20,000 active members across the globe and is regarded as the principal trade association of the corrections community.

The Association of State Correctional Administrators is comprised of the heads of each state’s correctional system as well as that of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, the nation’s four largest municipal jail systems, the Correctional Service of Canada and its provinces, Puerto Rico, Guam, Saipan, and the Virgin Islands. As such, the organization has active membership from 61 jurisdictions. The mission of ASCA is the improvement of correctional services and practices through the promotion and facilitation of progressive strategies leading to significant advances in the correctional field. The principal goals of the association are to influence and shape correctional policy, to identify and serve as a clearinghouse to share with its members proven correctional approaches, standards, and performance measures to ensure the furtherance of successful state-of the art-activities; and to support its membership through a regimen of training and professional development programs designed to enhance skills and awareness of major trends in the field.

Immensely gratified, we ask that you join us in congratulating Commissioner Brown and the New Jersey Department of Corrections on the receipt of this highly acclaimed, well deserved honor. The full story on the award may be found in the June issue of CORRECTIONS TODAY MAGAZINE.

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Magazine

Best in the
Business
2005

The
Best
in the
Business

Devon Brown

Progressive Leadership In The New Jersey DOC

By Gabriella Daley Klatt

Devon Brown, a Maryland native, began his corrections career in 1974 as a forensic psychologist for the New Jersey Department of Institutions and Agencies. Since then, he has steadily climbed the career ladder with positions in Maryland and the District of Columbia. Today, as commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Corrections, a position he has held since January 2002, Brown is recognized as a first-class public administrator whose leadership and initiative have been chronicled in numerous publications from *The New York Times* to *The Wall Street Journal* and even *Sports Illustrated*. As head of the department, he oversees more than 9,500 employees, 14 institutions and an inmate population of approximately 27,000 housed in state facilities, county jails and community halfway houses. Brown's family has a history of employment within the various criminal justice professions and has included judges, lawyers, police and correctional officers.

"In a very real sense, criminal justice is literally in my blood," Brown said, adding, "I was in many respects predestined to follow this trend and benefited from the knowledge and experience they had amassed."

Since earning a bachelor's degree from Morgan State University in 1971, Brown has continued to pursue his education, including earning a master's degree in psychology from the University of Toledo, a master's degree in public administration from the University of Baltimore and a law degree from the University of Maryland. In 1997, the National Institute of Justice awarded him the John B. Pickett Fellowship at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. While his early academic training was in the behavioral sciences, Brown says he knew "that this too would be a broad road that would ultimately lead me to my preordained destination within a criminal justice occupation."

Brown's background in forensic/correctional psychology has led him to make educational enrichment and social

responsibility the core focus of the DOC's offender programs. Behavior management modalities and initiatives such as the Stock Market Game, Shakespeare Behind Bars and A Study of Heroes all reflect Brown's emphasis on ensuring offenders leave prison better equipped to become good citizens. Primary among Brown's recent initiatives is the "Be Smart — Choose Freedom" crime prevention program, which is aimed at discouraging those at risk from becoming criminal offenders. This program is nationally recognized and 11 states currently have plans to replicate it. "The alarming fact that one out of every 138 residents in the country is in prison or jail clearly shows that we, as a profession, have potentially assumed an unprecedented role in the structuring of the American culture," Brown said.

Brown is just as devoted to staff development and recognizes the importance of education and training for those whose primary mission is public safety. The one piece of advice he would give to someone entering the corrections field is to "always strive to bring honor to the badge, your family and yourself." He added, "It is an indisputable truism that employees are the heart of all organizations and their professional growth must be regarded as an essential strategy in effectively meeting the ever-evolving challenges and imperatives of our field."

Brown noted: "The increased attention on our internal workings has revealed the high quality of our staff and managerial techniques, thus fostering greater appreciation of our skills and resources throughout the law enforcement community, including homeland security. However, this elevated attention has spawned intensified demands for accountability, professionalism and staff credentials that are commensurate with the enormity of our rapidly expanding duties." Brown believes that correctional leaders must be mindful of these realities and strive to reflect integrity, fairness and honor on and off the job. "Leadership in our profession is not for the faint of heart. Our challenges are

The
Best
in the Business



complex, ever-changing and constant," Brown said.

Charles Ellis, DOC chief of staff, said of Brown: "He is an employee-centered administrator whose sensitivity to staff and practice of taking a personal interest in their well-being have done much to enhance employee morale while fostering pride in membership within the corrections profession. ... [Brown] represents the finest any profession currently has to offer and through his example has proven that competence, commitment and compassion are not mutually exclusive administrative traits no matter the task."

Brown said the biggest challenge he has faced in his career has been "to inspire others, most prominently politicians, to understand the enormous contributions that corrections as a field is capable of making in the nation's efforts to formulate sound public policy." Brown continued: "I have found no other profession as dynamic, challenging and rewarding as corrections. More so than any other specialty, corrections encompasses all of the components of the criminal justice arena while providing the most substantial opportunity to positively impact troubled souls and further public safety." Brown is truly a progressive leader who strives to have the public understand that "correctional employees undeniably walk the meanest beats in the community and they do so with pride, proficiency and professionalism."

Gabriella Daley Klatt is director of ACA's Communications and Publications Department.